

# Hoosier Folklore

## CONTENTS

THE FOLKSINGER'S DEFENSE WM. HUGH JANSEN .....	65
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS TALES AND BELIEFS LELAH ALLISON .....	76
ARAPAHO TALES I ZDENEK AND JOY SALZMANN .....	80

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
Vigo County Public Library

A QUARTERLY OF FOLKLORE  
From Indiana and Neighboring States

# THE HOOSIER FOLKLORE SOCIETY

## OFFICERS, 1949-50

- President:** Miss Nellie M. Coats, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Vice-President:** Miss Margaret Montgomery, Shortridge High School, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Secretary:** Dr. May Klipple, 214 E. 12th St., Brookville, Indiana
- Treasurer:** Mrs. W. Edson Richmond, 716 South Park Avenue, Bloomington, Indiana
- Editor:** W. Edson Richmond, Department of English, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
- Regional Editor:** David S. McIntosh, Department of Music, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois
- Regional Editor:** Ivan Walton, Department of English, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Review Editor:** Herbert Halpert, Department of Languages, Murray State College, Murray, Kentucky

HOOSIER FOLKLORE  
published quarterly for  
The Hoosier Folklore Society  
by  
The Indiana Historical Bureau  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Copyright, 1950, by the Hoosier Folklore Society. Permission to reprint material must be obtained from the officers of the society.

Entered as second-class matter June 15, 1946, at the post office at INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, under the Act of August 24, 1912.

Subscription price \$2.00 per year. Single numbers fifty cents. The membership fee of the Hoosier Folklore Society includes a subscription to HOOSIER FOLKLORE and each member of the Society receives the quarterly.

# HOOSIER FOLKLORE

JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1950

VOL. IX

NO. 3

---

## THE FOLKSINGER'S DEFENSE

By WM. HUGH JANSEN

Very frequently when a folksong collector enters an area generally recognized as being rich in folksong, he looks for old singers, or he asks for old songs. Perhaps he even has a checklist of some kind which he uses to establish a canon for the items he is seeking. Usually he finds his old singers, who in quavering voices stumble through the desired old songs laboriously dredged out of their memories. Failing this, he turns to the less ancient, the sub-octogenarians who may not even be singers, and extricates from them the songs they remember hearing from their lamented forebears. All of this is highly commendable and serves a purpose which I would be the last to decry. But very hesitantly I submit the proposition that such research determines the nature of folksong a generation or more ago, and I further submit that at least in one area there is a living folksong tradition that is not adequately portrayed by such research.

On the basis of very inconclusive evidence I am going to try to give a picture in small of this current folksong tradition as represented by three Kentucky folksingers<sup>1</sup> and a brief analysis of their attitude towards their art and its products. The three singers are all male. One is 30, another 28, and the third ten years younger than that. The oldest is from Four Mile Hollow. He began to sing twenty years ago when he was ten or eleven and "just picked up songs from people." He taught himself the harmonica because he enjoyed hearing it

---

<sup>1</sup> Because of the desire of one to be anonymous, I have kept all three of these singers so. That desire incidentally—and a pretty comment it is upon the relation of the academic and the folk—arises from a fear of being scorned as a folksinger by his college mates.



over the radio. He taught himself guitar in the army, of which he is a much decorated veteran. The second, an ex-Marine, is from Beattyville. He estimates his repertoire as about 800 songs. He sings unaccompanied, or to his own guitar accompaniment. The youngest, who also accompanies himself on a guitar, lives on Greasy Creek, twelve miles from the nearest road passable to a school bus. For obvious reasons he has had only six months of high school education. The others, as a result of the G.I. bill, are both college educated. All three think of themselves as singers, amateurs it is true, but singers, and all three are recognized as singers. These are the persons who have supplied the material for this paper.

With great diffidence, the Marine lent me his "ballet." "Most people don't like this stuff," he said, "don't think it's much good." A *ballet* (the final consonant is pronounced) is the manuscript book in which a singer writes down his songs—usually to refresh his memory—and represents a practice of long standing among Kentucky folksingers. The writer of this one insisted that he never forgot a song and merely wrote down the 122 songs in his ballet because they were ones he particularly liked. I'm drawing my remarks upon the modern singer's repertoire entirely from this ballet: it includes far more songs than the other singers gave me, and they together mentioned or sang only four songs not in the ballet, although their versions sometimes differed radically from those in the manuscript.

The ballet contains 122 songs. Of this number 56 could be called love lyrics of some sort. Of these in turn, 38 could be called laments. Lover's laments adhere rather strictly to a pattern. All are in the first person. They concern one of two situations: either the singer assures his dead sweetheart that he will be true until they meet in heaven; or the singer insists he will lead a sad bachelor life carrying a torch for the one who has proved untrue to him (this last unhappy news has usually been disclosed to him in a letter today just after his fickle sweetheart had sworn undying fidelity yesterday). Well known titles are: *Red River Girl* (*Red River Valley*, more usually), *Rose of Sananton* (*sic*; *Alamo* is also a place name of an unknown place in the song and occurs without the preceding article), *Sweethearts Are Strangers* [*sic*], *Time Changes Everything* (a surprisingly realistic set of words),

*The Yellow Rose of Texas, You Are My Sunshine, It Makes No Difference Now, Darling Nellie Gray, and I Don't Want Your Greenback Dollar.* Most of the other titles include the words *Darling* or *Lonely*, and a strange similarity prevails among them. They are full of sentimental shibboleths and are generally "hillbilly" in tone. One called *Budding Roses* includes in its chorus the flat figure:

Down among the budding roses  
I am nothing but a stem.

Seven other love lyrics might be classified as semi-ballads; at least they combine narratives with loving laments. The only well-known one (and incidentally the favorite of one of the other singers) is *Little Rosewood Casket*. Others tell of the prisoner who will not shame his sweetheart by returning to her though she is willing to wait for him, of the lover going to the desert west, even of the man bewailing his divorce!

Eleven love lyrics do not lend themselves to classification. They include *Down in the Valley* (a reputable folksong) without the common jail-stanzas and *Smiles, A Long Long Trail, South of the Border*, and *Give Me One Dozen Roses* (all popular, rather than folk songs) and six sentimental songs, again perhaps most easily recognized as hillbillyish.

In addition to the fifty-six love lyrics, there are thirty-one religious songs. Only three of these are what might be termed well known: *Rock of Ages, Sweet Hour of Prayer, and Won't It Be Wonderful There*. Most of the others are revivalistic, first-person, confessions or expressions of gratitude for being saved. Many condemn worldly things, which are pretty rare in the mountains, anyhow. Some are quite spirited such as: *Are We Downhearted, Smile for Jesus Every Day, and The B-I-B-L-E, Yes, That's the Book For Me*. Two of these are *in toto*:

John 3:16, John 3:16  
When nothing else can help  
John 3:16

(to the tune of *Love Lifted Me*)

and

Pleasant Flat for Jesus, hear the battle cry  
Pleasant Flat for Jesus, we'll fight them till we die  
We will never give in while the people live in sin  
Pleasant Flat for Jesus, help us win.

Then there are ten songs close to the ballad and broadside type—no Child ballads, incidentally, although certainly the owner of the ballet knows several. Six of these are relatively well-known: *My Horses Ain't Hungry*, *Letter Edged in Black*, *Wildwood Flower*, *The Gangster's Warning*, *The Dying Cowboy*, and *Where is My Wandering Boy*. *My Horses Ain't Hungry*, alias *On Top of Old Smoky*, presents an interesting problem for further research. Among questions to be answered is whether it and *On Top of Old Smoky* are ultimately one song or whether they are two sets of words sharing one tune. One of the other two singers sang a one-stanza fragment to the same lovely tune, which he called a "hymn":

Go put up your horses  
And give them some hay  
I'm going away-ay  
To Heaven to stay.

The manuscript version is a four-stanza dialog between the singer who is going away because his sweetheart's parents don't approve of him and that sweetheart. She, the ubiquitous Polly of Southern folksong, agrees to elope despite his lack of "silver and gold," and they ride off while she sings an adieu to her momma.

Of the other more nearly traditional semi-ballads cited, one deserves quotation in full. If ever a ballad presented only the fifth act of a tragedy (read *melodrama*) and hinted at action in retrospect, the three-stanza *Wildwood Flower* fulfills just those qualifications:

I've been gathering flowers from the hillside,  
To wreath around your brow.  
But you've kept me waiting so long, dear,  
The flowers they have all withered [*sic*] down.  
  
It was on one bright June morning  
The Roses were in bloom.  
I shot and killed my darling.  
Oh, what will be my doom.  
  
Closed eyes cannot see these roses.  
Cold hands cannot hold them, we know.  
Your lips, they are still, they cannot kiss me.  
They are gone from me forevermore.

The last stanza is a kind of paraphrase of a floating stanza common to the lover's laments, though there it serves the lugubrious purpose of warning the faithless girl that her future show of repentant attention at the bier of her lover (the singer who frequently rejoices in the you'll-be-sorry-when-I'm-dead motif) will be too late to be appreciated.

The less known of these, to maintain my invented category, semi-ballads include the very popular—within this current folksong tradition—*I'm Just Here to Get My Baby Out of Jail*, the story of a "lady old and grey" and her long fruitless efforts to procure her son's freedom. Among other proposals, she makes the following one, interesting both in pattern and in diction:

I will pond you my watch,  
I will pond you my chain,  
I will pond you my gold dimond [sic] ring,  
Yes, warden,  
If that will get my baby out of jail.

Not to torture the reader with unbearable suspense, the result is, perhaps not surprisingly,

Then the gates were fund [sic] wide apart  
And she held him to her heart.  
In the arms of her dear boy there she died  
But smiling,

In the arms of her dear boy there she died.

One other little-known member of this category deserves quotation. Obviously a fragment, it has but two stanzas, the first of which echoes both one of the rhymed riddles so popular with the folk of Kentucky and the whole practice of starting a secular song with a moralizing stanza to be either sung or recited:

It's true a ring has no end,  
It's hard to find a faithful friend  
But when you find one good and true  
Change not the old one for the new.  
  
Must I be bound, while he goes free,  
Must I love one who don't love me,  
Or must I play a childless heart [sic]  
And hate the boy who broke my heart.



The chorus to this fragment, which repeats three times the line "Bring back my blue-eyed boy to me," followed by "That I may ever happy be," does not aid too much in clarifying the story suggested in the whole. It might be ventured, however, that the singer is a woman bewailing her husband who has abandoned her and taken with him their only child.

The last two semi-ballads recount the death of two lovers from consumption ("The old T.B. took them to Heaven"!) and, in horribly sentimental terms, the plight of the man who must shoot his now-senile but still faithful dog. Little more need be said of them.

As for the rest of the ballet, it contains a motley twenty-five items. Evenly divided between traditional songs like *Pretty Little Pink* or *Little Brown Jug* and modern semi-popular hillbilly songs such as *Down in Arkansas* and *Chawin' Chewin' Gum* are eight humorous songs. Both of the following stanzas are from the modern songs; yet their affinity to the older *Joe Clark* and *Cripple Creek* type of stanzas is obvious:

Momma sent me to the spring,  
Told me not to stay.  
Fell in love with a pretty littel [*sic*] girl  
And there I stayed all day.

Piegon [*sic*] toes and hair jet black,  
Was so crosseyed for a fact  
She cried and tears rolled down her back  
Down in Arkansas.

The remaining count is filled out by six nostalgic songs of homesickness, all rather hillbilly-like; four patriotic songs of both World Wars; two hillbilly dirges; and five miscellaneous items including *Cheer for Lee County High!*

A few generalizations may be made. More than half of the songs are not included in such a comprehensive index as Arthur Kyle Davis', which I mention because it is from the neighboring state of Virginia. An even larger proportion, though not necessarily including all those slighted by Davis, would be dismissed by the folksong student as *hillbilly*, *modern*, *corny*, or *trash*. Perhaps all of these are applicable terms, but they are not reasons for ignoring this group as a part of folksong. Although this compilation, the ballet, was made during the last fifteen years, it shows almost no influence from the



singer's acquaintance with jazz which he enjoys, or from his experience in the Marines. Certainly all of the songs were written down from memory. If the compiler can be believed, and I trust him, all were picked up from oral transmission. An indication of oral source is the sometimes ludicrously corrupt lines, such as the already-mentioned *Sweethearts Are Strangers*, an error which can hardly be ascribed to misspelling, for the compiler in general spells correctly all words that are part of his vocabulary (but *ramshackle*, for example, becomes two words always: *ram* and the biblical *shekel*). Other indications of oral transmission are fragmentary versions, versions that depart far from the source (where that is known to me), versions quite different from those sung by the other two singers, and the presence of floating stanzas in more than one song.

Of such is the kingdom of modern folksong—at least, as already indicated, in one heaven of folksong tradition, for it is not safe upon this limited experience to generalize for any wide area until similar uneclectic research has been done on a broader basis. Parenthetically, I am inclined to predict from such research similar findings wherever a lively folksong tradition prevails. I have already stated that, except in extent, the repertoire outlined above is common to all three singers. If so, then what is the attitude of these young men toward their songs?

First of all, and in general, they feel that they are on the defensive. They know or sense that outside of their communities the music they like is in bad repute. One, not the compiler of the ballet, wrote a thirteen-page document in an attempt to state the reactions he experienced to music, the history of his musical consciousness, and the development of his career in music. With perhaps unwitting pathos, he wrote of his basic training in the army: "Some of the boys were simple, like myself, and liked my singing. On the other hand, some were used to band and classical music and hated my singing. When a person made fun of my singing, no matter how large he was, I was ready to fight him. I do not believe there is anything that will make me so mad as someone making fun of my singing." Several times, this singer has literally and physically defended his songs. Once, with fifteen backers, he carried on a violent quarrel with a group of army gamblers who pre-

ferred their sport to his music. He reports, "I enjoyed this argument what little time it lasted, but I did not think it was so funny when I woke up next morning and found the E string of my guitar had been cut. I dared the man who did it to step out and admit it. The guilty person must have felt that it was healthier to remain quiet than to admit his guilt, for he did not step out." A gratifying victory for the folksong!

But there are other reasons for this defensive attitude. One of them, sadly, is formal education. Both of the college-educated singers have studied the ballad as English literature. Both realize that, despite some obvious similarities, there exist great differences between their songs and those that have received the scholarly accolade. One is quite troubled by this lack of agreement. He has read some collections of American folksongs and, while he finds their content familiar, he is discouraged by the complete ignoring of much that is part of his repertoire. Finally on this score of academic causation of the defensive attitude, let one singer describe his attempt to enter a university's school of music. After growing up in a family of folksingers, having conquered shape-note singing in his late 'teens, and having taught himself to play two musical instruments, he interviewed a music school dean: "I told him about my interest in music and what little I knowed was learned from self-teaching. He came to the conclusion that I did not have enough background to major in music and advised . . . [another major]. I took his advice . . . I believe I could have taken music despite my meager background and could have done better in that field than I have done in my present field." The speaker, let it be added, is making a good record as an economics major.

All three of these singers—even the secluded, relatively uneducated one—sense that the "cultured" person who comes to hear them sing expects from a folksinger songs that they do not generally sing. In other words, they recognize that there are folksongs and folksongs: The scholar knows the first and they know the second. The scholar likes what they don't know and disdains what they do know.

In connection with the feeling for the disparity between the scholar's concept of folksong and what the folksinger knows is included in actual, present-day folksong tradition,

the oldest of the singers—and the most philosophical about his art—commented upon his father and a much older half-brother, both recognized singers in their mountain communities. My informant wondered about the origin of the “American songs” (his attempt to categorize the non-Child ballad) sung by his elders and, after consideration, advanced the theory that these “American songs” must have been the equivalent of the hillbilly songs of his father’s youth. It did not occur to him, nor did he perhaps know, that some of these are now creeping into folksong indexes. However, he did feel that perhaps in his own future old age, the songs he now sings may receive more respect. Behind all this, it seems to me there lies a thought to be weighed by the folksong scholar who rejects the relatively recent hillbilly song from his canon of folk music.

Second, and perhaps above all, these singers like their songs. I repeat the ballet-maker recorded songs because he liked them. He says that he sits at night and plays and sings for himself rather than listening to his radio. The singer who attempted to write out his reactions to music described rhapsodically his earliest recollections of a folksong sung by his brother, “a lover of worldly pleasures,” who “could sing ballads like an angel . . . as if every word was coming from the very depths of his heart. This [*Little Rosewood Casket*] was the first ballad I can remember of ever having heard and it thrilled me until I felt that my heart would burst; I could see every incident the ballad told. . . . While the words . . . were still fresh in my memory, I ran out of the house and up high in the mountain where I could not be seen or heard.” Thus the genesis of a singer, and the continuation of a changing tradition.

Third, there is within these singers a pride in their art and a deep gratitude for any recognition of their performance. The youngest singer commented upon his own performance with a naive, “That was just like ———,” naming a local radio performer of growing hillbilly reputation who seems headed for the national barn dance programs. The oldest of the three cheerfully underwent considerable personal inconvenience to record his songs for me, delighted that I should want them. He quietly listened to a playback of his voice and in placid, matter-of-fact tones pronounced it, “Pretty good.”



He has had more chance to be heard than any of the others and has observed critically the reactions to his art.

He wrote, with a sad combination of humility and defiance, of his post-war experiences in Europe: "We sang and played musical instruments in the German beer joints, dated the German girls and fought each other. The most of my spare time was spent in playing and singing to the German girls. They all seemed to like my singing and playing and seemed to regard me as an outstanding musician. They probably would have thought otherwise if they had known as much about American music as Americans do. The girls flocked around me because of my singing and playing. I did not think they liked me as well as they appeared [to?] until I got beat up, beyond walking, by an American soldier from Texas. . . . Several German girls cried, called my name several times, carried me to my room and put some kind of hot mixtures wrapped up in wet rags to my head. It really makes a person feel good to have someone think enough of him in a country he has just helped conquer to cry over him and doctor him. . . . The actions of these sympathetic German girls were pleasing and proved to me that a person can make friends of his bitterest enemies with music and kindness."

The international triumph of American mountain song was not ended. As the singer traveled through France, "I sat in the door of the boxcar and played my guitar and sang. . . . Several French girls, who could speak English, overheard my singing and came up and asked me to sing for them. After they told me they liked my singing, several of the other boys joined in with me [again the humility, or is it that disagreeable thing realism?] to help impress the girls." But perhaps this is more than enough to show the modern folksinger's pride in his singing and his gratitude for any appreciation of that singing.

Finally, it should be clear that all three of these young singers are, in the best sense, amateurs. They sing for their communities, for their social gatherings, for their church meetings. One, with the help of a kindred soul, formed a duo, called The Kentucky Briarhoppers, and "got up a little program for the company" while in the army—the nearest any of them has been to professional appearances. Two of these young men, however, aspire to the professional field. Their

ideal is to sing at Renfro Valley or on "The Grand Old Opry." They hear these programs, listen to them avidly as do other folk of Kentucky. On Greasy Creek, where there is no electricity, the one house with a battery radio is crowded on Saturday nights with people come to hear "The Grand Old Opry" and like programs. Others have commented upon this "depraved" taste of the mountain people and its "disastrous" effects. I personally am inclined to think that the popularity of such programs reflects a long extant taste rather than formulates a new taste to replace an old one. However that may be, these young folk singers listen to the radio singers and remark upon similarities between the radio songs and their own. They are like, though not identical. And these young singers want their versions to be heard. Perhaps their hopes will be achieved, for Kentucky is full of little radio stations with "local-talent" hillbilly programs which Kentuckians listen to.

To sum up this tentative report based upon limited and preliminary research:

There is new, genuine folksong activity, meeting all the requisites of folk transmission except, *perhaps* (and that is the subject of another paper), that of duration of oral circulation.

The taste of the new, young folksinger is not, by scholarly standards, pure, though it is authentically both folk and modern.

That same folksinger knows his taste is condemned and resents the reprobation.

"The Grand Old Opry" and kindred programs come more closely than is generally admitted to representing the tastes and the musical standards of the folk—at least, the folk of Kentucky—and such taste is likewise reflected in material that circulates by the folk means of oral-aural transmission.

The University of Kentucky

Lexington, Kentucky

# SOUTHERN ILLINOIS TALES AND BELIEFS

By LELAH ALLISON

Unusual tales and beliefs, as well as old ones retold and believed, are alive in southern Illinois to-day, as well as they were in the pioneer days. If a listener lends a sympathetic ear and gives the talker the feeling that he will not be jeered, there is a wealth of folklore to be gleaned in this region which is a mixture of the old pioneer families who came from the South or who followed the Ohio by flatboat and the newer bloods who have come to this region for various reasons: coal mining, oil, or simply because others had settled here before. Both factions have their beliefs and tales to tell.

Some of my college students<sup>1</sup> who have their roots in different sections of the southern part of this state have helped me in my collection. There is no effort made in this small collection to group the tales or beliefs according to type. There has been an effort to keep the personality of the teller. Some tales have a reality that is surprising.

## THE CHURCH GHOST

A church about six miles east of McLeansboro became haunted; people testified that they had seen the white, thin creature float in and out of the church. Others scoffed at the idea, but they did not care to be alone in the church when it was dark. One dark, stormy night a man on horseback was caught in a terrible electric storm. Being near the church, he decided to take shelter in it until the storm was over. He was the type who was not afraid, but in a flash of lightning he was amazed and frightened to see a white figure bending over the *Bible* in the pulpit. Shivers ran up and down his spine, and his hair began to raise. The white figure started down

---

<sup>1</sup> Students of McKendree College who helped me collect these stories and beliefs: Stewart Grant, Ruth Richardson, Constance Parrish, Norma Cummins, Joan Hall, Shirley Britton, La Vern Smith, and Jeanette Thornley.



the aisle toward him. The storm was terrible; it was face either the ghost or the storm. The decision was taken from him; he could not move from fear, and so he watched the white figure approaching in the semi-darkness. The figure came closer and closer; he could not take his eyes from it. Just at that moment a flash of lightning made the ghost's features clear for a moment. He recognized an old lady who lived near the church who had gone insane. It was with a sigh of relief that he watched her pass into the storm so that his hair could settle back into its natural position.

### ROCKING SHOES

In the same neighborhood a group of farm hands were discussing the qualities of their employers; each was sure that he had to work harder than the others. One reported that he had to get up at daylight and work very late. As each man told his story, the length of the day's work increased. Art's turn came; he cleared his throat and hitched forward in his chair. He had had to wait; he was determined to enjoy the spotlight.

"My boss is a regular taskmaster. He keeps me working so long that when I take off my shoes at night and pitch them under the bed they are still rocking the next morning when the old man calls me."

### LOUD NOISE WARNS WIVES

Near Elkhville two neighbor women had husbands who worked on the railroad. One day when the husbands were at work and the women were in their homes doing their house work, the women heard a loud noise that startled and frightened both of them. They rushed out of their homes, looked bewildered at each other, and sought an explanation of the unusual noise that had caused both to dart from their homes. There was nothing to be seen; there was no explanation for any noise; both felt foolish, but they compared notes and realized that they had heard the same thing simultaneously. Each returned to her work, but she was disturbed by that unexplainable something. It preyed on their minds.

Later that night the body of one of the husbands was found beside the railroad seriously wounded. Although he

was taken to a hospital, he could not tell what had happened but soon died. The body of the other husband was found; he had been shot too, but he was already dead. The bodies were too far from their homes for the wives to have heard the actual shooting. Neither the crime nor the noise that warned the wives was explained.

#### MR. BRENNINGER AND TRIXIE

In the Kentucky mountains a man named Brenninger liked to hunt possum, but his dog Trixie always got in the way. One day he decided to outsmart her while he hunted, and so he shut her in the shed. He went hunting with peace of mind, and when he saw a movement in the grass, he fired. He was amazed to find that he had killed Trixie. He did hate to lose the little trick, and he hated to leave her there in the grass. An idea came to him. He would dress the dog and give it to his neighbor Smith for a possum. He and Smith hadn't got along very well together, and this would be a good way to play a trick on his neighbor. When he took Trixie to Smith, he pretended it was a peace offering.

"I ain't got nuthin' agin' you, Smith. I just thought I'd bring you a possum, seein' as I had two." Smith was pleased, and he thanked Brenninger, but it so happened that he had plenty of fresh meat at that time. After his neighbor had gone, he told his wife that he would give the possum to Mr. Brown, who dearly loved possum, and that afternoon he carried the possum to Brown. The Browns were much pleased, and decided to have a big dinner to which they invited Brenninger because he liked possum very much.

The dinner was a success. All that was left of the possum was a few bones. Brenninger leaned back, and to be polite asked Brown where he caught the possum. Knowing that Brenninger did not like Smith, Brown hesitated, but he decided to tell the truth.

"I didn't catch him at all. Smith gave him to me." A bomb had dropped on Brenninger, and something terrible hit his stomach and was moving rapidly toward his throat. He rushed from the room to the side of the barn.

"Trixie," he moaned, "I've called you many times when you did not come, but this is one time you are going to. Blurb!"

## THE DEATH CROWN

There are stories of crowns forming at the crown of the head at death in several parts of Illinois, but this one was told at Carmi.

After the death of an old lady, a relative was preparing to wash the bed clothing when a neighbor asked if she intended to save the crown from the pillow. The relative did not know there would be a crown, but she was willing to look for it. In the pillow on which the lady had died there was a crown of feathers, interwoven as firmly as a bird builds a nest, the feathers fitted perfectly one on the other in a circular form. She kept the crown to show to neighbors. The neighbor said that when a crown was formed under a dying head that the soul would pass into heaven, but if the crown were not formed that the soul would not go to that desired place.

## DREAMS COME TRUE

A woman living near Reeseville dreamed one night that her husband died; the dream was so vivid and seemed so realistic that she told what she had dreamed. A short time thereafter, her husband did die, just as she had dreamed. That woman seems to have an unusual power. When she loses something, she dreams where to look for it and always finds it.

## DAUGHTER TALKS TO MOTHER IN DREAM

Near Marion lives a woman who lost her mother but who talks to her mother at night when she dreams. They meet, converse about ordinary things, and do things together—when the daughter sleeps. It is as realistic to her as their life together before the mother died.<sup>2</sup>

## NOISES BEFORE DEATH

A family that lives near Chester had the experience of a door opening and closing without a hand near it. It was not the wind banging it shut. It moved as gently as if a human hand were on the knob, but nothing was to be seen. Unusual noises were heard; there was nothing to account for them. Soon a death came to the family. They believe that the unusual noises always foretell a death, if one listens.

McKendree College

Lebanon, Illinois

---

<sup>2</sup> A story much like this one is also told in Lebanon.



# ARAPAHO TALES I

By ZDENEK AND JOY SALZMANN

The collection of folktales of the Arapaho Indians recorded half a century ago by Dorsey and Kroeber<sup>1</sup> represents such an ample repertory of traditional narrative that any significant addition would seem unlikely. Even though subsequent collecting can supply only a limited number of new motifs and still fewer new types, the following material should prove valuable for comparative purposes.<sup>2</sup> If sets of analogous tales obtained from different sources are compared, it can be easily observed that the product of the individual background of the narrator, the influence of his environment and the erosive effects of time, is by no means constant; indeed, the extent of variability ranges from almost none to instances in which the identity of the hero may be the only common denominator of the type.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George A. Dorsey and Alfred L. Kroeber, *Traditions of the Arapaho* (Field Columbian Museum, Anthropological Series, Vol. V, Chicago, 1903).

<sup>2</sup> The tales were obtained from a Northern Arapaho, Mr. John B. Goggles, 67, of Ethete, Wyoming (Wind River Reservation). Wording and style of the original have been retained wherever possible; editorial changes are concerned almost entirely with grammar. The field trip during which these tales were collected was made possible by grants from the American Philosophical Society and the Graduate School of Indiana University, which are hereby gratefully acknowledged.

For other sources of Arapaho tales, see George A. Dorsey, *The Arapaho Sun Dance* (Field Columbian Museum, Anthropological Series, Vol. IV, Chicago, 1903); H. R. Voth, "Arapaho Tales," *JAF*, 25 (1912), pp. 43-50; Zdeněk Salzmán, "An Arapaho Version of the Star Husband Tale," *HF*, 9 (1950), pp. 50-58.

See also the tales of the closely related Gros Ventre (Atsina), for which the main source is A. L. Kroeber's *Gros Ventre Myths and Tales* (Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. I, Part III, New York, 1907).

<sup>3</sup> Thus, several tales were obtained from the informant which do not differ sufficiently from their respective variants recorded by Dorsey and Kroeber, *op. cit.* (in the references below, followed by number and page), to warrant publication:

White Man and the Kingfisher does not vary appreciably from Nih'a'çan Dives on the Ice (no. 58, pp. 113-115).

There is little doubt that taletelling is becoming a lost art among the Arapaho. One can easily observe, for instance, that due to ever-increasing acculturation, comic strips are rapidly becoming the main source of fictional humor and adventure, particularly for the younger generation. It remains to be seen whether the veneration shown by the present taletellers for the traditional material will be found in the generations to come.<sup>4</sup>

White Man and the Bears (alternatively White Man and the Plums) correspond to Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup> and the Bear-Women (no. 49, pp. 101-103) except for the conclusion, which in our version takes the following explanatory form: The bears were not burned to death; the smoke hurt their eyes so that they could hardly open them. For this reason, bears have very small eyes in proportion to their other organs. Because they were so mistreated at that time, bears became hostile to man.—For another published variant of this tale, cf. H. R. Voth, *op. cit.*, p. 48 (The Cannibal and the Fox).

White Man and His Friend corresponds to Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup> Imitates His Host (no. 61, p. 120).

White Man and His Mother-in-Law, for which see Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup> and His Mother-in-Law (no. 39, pp. 75-77), has been told with considerably less detail, undoubtedly to avoid obscenity.

The Comanche and the Kiowa corresponds to The Faithless Woman and the Kiowa (no. 114, p. 262); our version is said to be a recent story of Comanche provenience. Accordingly, the main character is a Comanche instead of an Arapaho.

White Man and the Bird corresponds to Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup> Loses His Eyes (no. 17, pp. 51-52). In our version, in order to get back his sight, the trickster exchanges his eyes for those of a helpful mouse. Soon, by trickery, he wins back his own eyes.

White Man and the Elks corresponds to Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup> and the Elks (no. 28, pp. 61-62) except for the conclusion, which in our version adds the final incident of Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup> and the Bear-Women (no. 49, pp. 101-103), viz., spilling of remaining meat scraps into fire.

Both White Man and the Beavers and White Man and the Ducks continue with identical accounts of a race with Coyote, who in turn tricks White Man out of his catch. Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup> and the Beavers (no. 25, pp. 58-59) lacks the race entirely, whereas in Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup>'s Feast of Beaver Stolen by Coyote (no. 24, pp. 57-58) and Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup> and the Dancing Ducks (no. 26, pp. 59-60, and no. 27, pp. 60-61), Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup> is deprived of his meat by other trickery.

Conversely, as an example of almost complete divergence, compare the version of Blood-Clot-Boy in Dorsey and Kroeber, *op. cit.*, no. 130, pp. 298-304, with that recorded by the present editors, to appear in a forthcoming paper.

<sup>4</sup> The informant tells us of an interesting tradition which has

THE STORY OF SIX BROTHERS AND ONE SISTER<sup>5</sup>

Indians used to make their camps around rivers. One time all the young men from one of these camps went out to search for enemies. Only a few old men were left in the camp with the women and children. In one family of this camp there were six brothers, who had left with the other young men, and two sisters, who stayed at home. One day these girls and some other children were playing "bear"<sup>6</sup> near the river. The child who was the bear would guard certain berry bushes and try to keep the others from picking the berries. Soon one of the two sisters was touched and had to be the bear. Just after she had gone into the bushes the other children heard an animal grumbling, and all of a sudden a real bear came towards them. Somehow the little girl had been changed into the bear. All the children ran home as fast as they could, and only the bear's sister was caught. With her claws the bear tore the girl's back.

Meanwhile the children had told the people in the camp what had happened and everybody had run away. The sister who had been clawed walked back to the deserted camp and went to her tepee feeling sick. Soon the bear came up to her and began talking in the girl's language. She told the girl to go and get some water to drink. So the sister got some water from a little stream near by. The bear said, "I don't drink this kind of water. Go back and find some other water, the kind I want." The girl went back to the stream, but she did not know what kind of water to get. A little bird spoke to her

---

persisted through the generations and is still observed. According to him, tales are told to children only during the winter months at night when everyone is in bed. Summer nights are too short for both tale-telling and sleeping. To show that they are awake and listening, the children have to say *híiyi snow* every so often; otherwise the teller discontinues his story. By saying *snow*, the children supposedly assure themselves of long life; yet the informant could not explain why *híiyi* is used in such a connection.

<sup>5</sup> This story was volunteered by the informant when the Arapaho words for various stars and constellations were obtained. The Pleiades are referred to in English by the Arapaho as *six brothers and one sister*, whereas the Arapaho word for Pleiades, *béénokúθi*?, means literally *they sit together*. The story explains the origin of this constellation.

<sup>6</sup> A children's game in which the players count off to determine "it." "It" then becomes the bear and tries to touch one of the other players, who then becomes a bear himself. Cf. tag.



and said, "What is troubling you?" She answered, "My sister has turned into a bear and wants a special kind of water to drink, but I don't know what kind she wants." The little bird replied, "I will tell you. Get the same kind of water as before but drop some green moss into it so that the bear can see it there." So the girl got some water and put in it a little green moss. Then she took it back to the tepee. The bear looked at and said, "That's the kind of water I use," and began to drink it.

When all the water was gone, the bear gave her sister another task. "Bring me some wood," she said. So the girl went into the brush to gather wood. Just at that time her brothers were returning to the camp and saw her. They said, "What is the matter? Where are all the people?" The girl told them everything that had happened and showed them where the bear had clawed her back. They said, "Take some of this wood to her, and if she doesn't like it, come back here. We will be waiting for you." The girl went back to the camp with the wood. The bear looked at it and then said, "No, that's not the right kind of wood. Go back and find the wood I use." So the sister went back to the brush. Her brothers were waiting there and she asked them what she should do next. "We will tell you," they answered. "You must take her some vines. We will help you gather them." As they were gathering the vines, the brothers killed a rabbit. When the vines were ready to be carried back to camp, the young men gave the rabbit to their sister and said, "Tell the bear that you killed this rabbit. If she asks you how you killed it, put it on the ground as if it were sitting, then take a stick and throw it at the rabbit. You must hit it right across the head. If you miss, the bear will not believe you and she will search for us. When you cook the rabbit, get the inside fat very hot. When the grease begins to drip, throw it in the bear's face. We will be close to the tepee watching you."

Then the girl went back to the camp with all the things her brothers had given her. "That's the right kind of wood," said the bear when she saw the vines. Then the girl showed her the rabbit. "How did you kill it?" asked the bear. "I will show you," answered the girl as she put the rabbit on the ground as if it were sitting. Then she stepped back a little, took the stick, and said, "This is the way I hit it." She threw

the stick and it hit the rabbit right on its head. The bear said, "I guess you are right. What will you do with it?" "I will cook it and then eat it," the girl replied. "Go ahead," said the bear. So the girl put the rabbit over the fire. She watched the fat until it began to drip. The bear was sitting near the fire with her eyes closed; she was almost asleep. Then the girl took the rabbit and threw it into the bear's face. The sizzling grease splashed into the bear's eyes and burned them. Then the girl ran out and screamed for her brothers. The bear ran out behind her. Her brothers were standing on either side of the tepee with their arrows ready to shoot. Just as soon as the bear came out, the arrows were shot from every direction. The bear fell to the ground, dead. Then the brothers gathered wood, made a fire, and when it was blazing high, threw the bear onto it. The bear began to growl. They waited until they thought that all the flesh was burned, and then they spread the ashes with the bones over the ground, but whenever there was a piece of flesh left on a bone, they heard the bear growling as if it were still alive. Finally the bones were all burned white and there was no sound.

Then the brothers said that they would have to go after the people who had run away from the camp when the bear had come. Before they left, the girl said, "I want this bone from the bear's front leg." Her brothers asked her why, and she replied that she wanted to play with it as if it were a doll. They said, "All right, take it. But be sure to hold it tight. Don't lose it!" Then they all began to run. They traveled all day and at night they were still running.

Toward morning, when they began to see light, the little girl became so sleepy that she did not notice that she had dropped the bone. Then her brothers asked her, "Where is that bone?" "I lost it," she answered. "Well," they said, "we must run faster because the bear is coming behind us." So they ran again, faster. Soon they were too tired to run any longer. They looked behind them and saw the bear running after them. She was coming closer, and soon they could see her teeth shining. She was very angry. "We are up against it now," said the brothers to each other. They could not do anything to save themselves, and there was no place to hide. Then their sister said, "I think I can do something that will save us." "Well, whatever you are going to do, do it

quickly because the bear is very close," answered her brothers. So the girl told her brothers to stand in a group. Then she took her ball which she had carried with her and threw it into the air. When it came down, she kicked it up and one of her brothers rose with it into the sky. When the ball came down again, she kicked it before it could touch the ground and another brother went up into the sky. She did this until all of her brothers were safe in the sky. She was the last to go up. Just as the bear was ready to grab her, she kicked the ball and went up into the sky herself. The bear was then so angry that she fell down dead and disappeared.

These brothers and their sister remained in the sky and turned into stars. Each brother had stopped just a little below the brother ahead of him, and the sister was the lowest of all. That is why we see six stars in a group and a smaller one a little below them.<sup>7</sup>

#### FOUND-IN-GRASS<sup>8</sup>

Many years ago a man and his wife lived in a lonely tepee in the foothills. The man used to go out often to hunt for some meat for winter. He would come home sometimes very late at night. One time he told his wife that if he was late coming home, she should not pay any attention to anyone shouting close by where they lived and that she should not go out. "I know the trail home even if it is dark," he said.

Time went on. One night he was very late coming home. The woman sat up waiting for him until long past midnight

---

<sup>7</sup> For another Arapaho mythical explanation of the Pleiades, cf. Dorsey and Kroeber, *op. cit.*, no. 82, pp. 160-161.

For a more detailed and extended variant of the above references, not involving the origin of the Pleiades, cf. *ibid.*, no. 81, pp. 153-159.

Of the four Arapaho variants of the tale printed above, two make no reference to the Pleiades, viz., Dorsey and Kroeber, *op. cit.*, no. 105, pp. 238-239, and H. R. Voth, *op. cit.*, p. 49 (The Bear Girl); one seems implicitly to refer to the Pleiades, viz., Dorsey and Kroeber, *op. cit.*, no. 80, pp. 152-153; the fourth, a fragmentary version, viz., H. R. Voth, *op. cit.*, p. 44 (The Origin of the Pleiades), makes direct reference to the constellation.

For a general bibliography of the North American Indian tales explaining the origin of the Pleiades (A773), see Stith Thompson's *Tales of the North American Indians* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), pp. 291f.

<sup>8</sup> The informant volunteered this tale, giving it no name. Later with the help of the editors, he identified it as Found-in-Grass.

and still he had not come. Then she started to worry about her husband. She heard somebody shouting close by as if he were lost and it sounded as if the person were dragging something behind him as he walked. Several times the sound passed close by her tepee. She decided to look out, thinking it was her husband. She got up, walked to the door, and opened it just a little bit to look through. Just as soon as she looked out, the man shouted to her. He came up to the door, walked in, and sat down. The man looked very strange and the woman was a little afraid of him. His matted hair was so long that it trailed on the ground as he moved, making the sound that the woman had heard. She wanted to give him something to eat to get rid of him quickly. When she found some food and gave it to him, he pushed back the dish. "I don't use this kind of plate," he said. The woman thought a bit. She had a pair of woman's leggings, and she set them in front of this man and then placed the food on them. "That's pretty close," he said and pushed the dish back again. The woman thought a second time. She had a buckskin dress, and she spread that in front of this man and then placed the food on it. "This time," he said, "you're very close." The woman thought, "He might want me to lie down and hold his food on myself." So she lay down in front of this man and placed the food on herself. "This time you are right," he said, and he began to eat. He had a big long knife and when he was through eating, he cut her open; there were twins in the woman. He took one out and threw him down by the doorway, and then threw the other one in back of the tepee. After that he left.

Soon afterwards the man finally came home. As he stopped by the doorway, he did not see any light. He called to his wife, "I am here!" There was no answer. Again he called his wife by her name and again there was no answer. Then he went in and made a light. He saw his wife lying there, dead, cut open. He was very sad. He talked to his wife: "That's what I told you; I warned you not to listen to anyone but me." He did not eat anything. He dressed his wife in her best clothes and placed her on a bed as if she were sleeping. Then he left again and went far up into the hills. There he cried all night and all day.

Very late in the evening when he was tired and hungry and



thirsty for water, he came home. There he saw marks as if boys had been playing with his arrows; and inside the tepee he saws boys' tracks. He thought that the tracks must have been made by his sons. He took something to eat and walked away toward the hills again. When he was sure that the boys could no longer see him, he rushed back to the tepee. He stopped close by it and listened. The boy who had been thrown by the door was calling to his partner, "Hey, brother, come out now; let's play with arrows. Our father is far out in the hills. He's gone now." The other boy came out and they began to play an arrow game. While they were busy playing, they started to quarrel. One's arrow was close to a stick that they were shooting at and the other's was almost touching it.

While they were busy quarreling, the man rushed in and caught one of them. He talked to him, trying to quiet him down. But the little boy began to fight, scratching and biting him. Finally the man quieted his son. Then he told the boy to call his brother again and to play with him. Meanwhile he would be close by. When they had played almost half the game, the boy was to try to grab his brother and then call his father. "I'll come right in and catch him," the father said. So the boy called his brother to come out and play again, but his brother said no. The first boy asked him why. "I don't want to come out because you talked to our father just now," he answered. "No, I've been fighting him. I scratched and bit him and he let me go again. I didn't make up with him," the first boy replied. So the boy who was hiding came out and they started to play with the arrows again. While they were playing, the first boy grabbed his brother, pushed him down, and held him. Then he shouted, "Daddy, come here!" Their father rushed in and caught the second boy. He talked to him, telling him that they would live together and be happy, although their mother was dead. He said that he wanted a little company, someone to talk to and to work for. He meant his two sons.

The next day the boys asked their father to make bows and arrows for them so that they could play with them. He asked them, "What do you want the bows made of?" "Buffalo rib bones," they answered. "They may be too strong." "No. that's what we want," they insisted. "What kind of arrows

do you want?" their father asked. "We want arrows made out of buffalo neck cord," they said. So their father made the bows and arrows for his sons. One boy wanted his arrows painted red and the other, black. They were made exactly as the boys wanted them. Then they told their father to build a sweat lodge, and when he had finished it, they wanted their mother placed in it. So the man brought his wife's body and put it in the sweat lodge. They covered up the lodge tightly. The boy with the black arrows then shot straight up into the air. When the arrow came back down, a big noise came down with it. The boy shouted, "Mama, come out, come out!" They could see and hear that something was moving around inside the lodge. Then the boy with the red arrows shot up into the air, and when the arrow came down, the same thing happened—a loud noise came down with it. The boy shouted, "Mama, come out, come out!" Again they saw something moving around inside the lodge. The boy with the black arrows shot a second time into the air. When the arrow came down, he shouted to his mother, "Come out, quick!" And it seemed as if the woman was on her feet, moving around inside the lodge. Then the boy with the red arrows shot his second arrow into the air and shouted as it came down, "Come out, Mama, come out!" And the woman came out of the sweat lodge; there was nothing wrong with her. They were all very happy to be together.

So time went on and the boys grew up. They liked to hunt in the timber. One day their father told them that they must not go near a certain place. In the big timber there was a man living by himself, a wicked man, he told the boys, and they were not to go close to that place. But one of the brothers wanted to go there; his brother said, "No, I don't want to go. Our father told us not to go there." The first boy said, "I think we should go and see what is there anyway. Let's go!" So they went. There they found a tepee. When they went inside, they saw the man with the long hair sitting there. In the top of his head there was an opening through which the boys could see his brains. The man said, "Hello, my grandsons,<sup>9</sup> I'm glad you're here. I needed company today. You boys can sit with me and try to untangle my hair." So the

---

<sup>9</sup> Implies age difference rather than kinship.

boys sat one on either side of the man and tried to untangle his hair. While they were working, the man fell asleep and soon was snoring. Then the boys tied his hair to the tepee posts. Next they threw a rock into the fireplace. When it had become red-hot, they picked it up and threw it into the opening in the man's head and burned his brain. The heat made his brain begin to boil. The man could not move because his hair was tied to the tepee posts. This was the way the boys killed the wicked man. When they thought that he was dead, they cut off all his long strings of hair and took them home. They told their father that they could use them to make rope. The man asked his boys where the hair had come from. When they told him, he did not believe that they had killed the wicked man. He asked how they had done it. When the boys had told him, he finally believed that they had really killed the wicked man in the timber.

One day the man gave his sons another warning. He told them not to go near the tree which stood by itself away from all other trees. "Don't go over there, don't go near," he said. So they played around in the brush and timber. But one boy wanted to go close to the tree. His brother said, "No, Father told us not to go over there." But the first boy was determined to go, so they both went to see what they could see close by the tree. There they found a lot of bones, bones from many kinds of animals, even human bones, all lying around. And while they were looking down at these bones, all of a sudden the tree began to fall toward them. But the boys were quick, and they jumped away from the place where the tree landed. It was broken into many pieces, but it did not kill the boys. They looked at it and said, "You wicked tree, you killed all these people and animals. You have been wicked. Whenever a tree falls down, it will never get up again. You will lie here until you rot away." That is what they said. When they left, they took some of the sticks from the tree home with them to use for firewood. They told their father that they had got rid of the tree that had been killing so many people and animals. Their father asked them how they had done it, and they told him all that had happened.

Some time later he warned the boys of a certain place where there were sage chickens. He told them that they must not bother them, "for if you do, if you shoot them with your



arrows, you won't hit them. And if you run out of arrows, don't pick up an arrow, don't use it a second time. Just leave it alone. I can make new arrows for you." So they stayed away from that place.

Next he warned his boys not to go into the timber where the eagles' nest was. In the top of a tall tree these eagles had a nest with little ones in it. The man told his sons not to bother the eagles but to stay away from them. But one boy wanted to go and see the young birds. The other boy said, "No, Father told us not to go. We must not go." But his brother insisted on going over to look at the nest. They found it in the top of the tree just as their father had told them. The boy who never listened to his father's warnings decided to climb the tree. When he reached the nest, he throw the young helpless birds down to the ground. Both boys began to strike and kick them. Then one brother asked one of the young birds, "Who are your father and mother? Where are they?" The bird replied, "My father is always up in the sky." "What does he do when he comes to see you? What happens then?" asked the boy. It answered, "When my father comes to see me, the clouds are dark; it rains, there is electricity in the air, and sometimes it hails." The other boy picked up the other young bird, kicked it and threw it around, and asked it, "What happens when your mother comes to see you?" "When my mother comes down to see me, there is lightning, the winds are strong, and you can see the trees being blown through the air." That is what the little bird answered. "Well, call your father and mother; let them come down. We want to see who they are," said the two boys. So the birds began to make a noise as if they were whistling. The eagles heard their children calling for help. At once the boys saw black clouds and lightning, and a strong wind came up. They could see hills blown over and trees flying through the air. The eagles were coming down. The older boy shot his arrow onto a rock and it stuck there. Then he said to the eagles, "If you can pull my arrow off this rock, you can kill me. If you can't pull it off this rock, why, I'll kill you!" So the first eagle shrieked as loud as the thunder, came down, grabbed the arrow, and went up with it as far into the sky as the buffalo neck cord arrow would stretch. It tangled around the eagle's beak. Then it pulled back again and the



eagle fell onto the rock and was killed. Ever since this time all eagles have had yellow strips across their beaks just at the place where the arrow became tangled. Then the other eagle came down and tried to pull the arrow away from the rock, and was killed in the same way. Now both the eagles were dead. The boys pulled off their wings and took them home. They showed their father what they had done. They said, "We killed those two eagles that call themselves thunder-birds. They have been killing many people, but they won't ever do harm again."

Although the man had warned his sons not to bother sage chickens, one day they decided to look for them anyway. When they saw them, the boys began to shoot the sage chickens, but they ran out of arrows. One brother said, "Don't pick them up. We'll just have to quit and go home." But the other boy wanted to go on shooting; he picked up one of his arrows to use again. Before he took another shot with the same arrow, the sage hens flew off. At once a whirlwind came up, a wind strong enough to blow the boys away. They ran for home. One boy got inside the tepee, but just as the second boy got hold of the door, he was blown away.

He did not know where he was or where he was going. The place where he landed was strange to him. Nobody was around; there was just himself, close by the river. There the boy lived in the brush. He would hide there at night and sleep, with nothing to eat. When he was very hungry, he would drink from the river and eat some of the roots which grew on its banks. One day, when he was hiding in the brush, some people moved in to make camp. He heard the people talking; he looked out and saw many people setting up their tepees. Some of them were coming down the river bank to get brush. When the people had gathered enough, they all went back except one old woman who was picking up brush near the boy's hiding place. He lay there quietly, watching her. Soon the old woman saw him. "Now, that's my grandson,<sup>10</sup> that's my grandson! Come on, I'll take you home," she said. So the old woman took the boy home, fed him, and cared for him. The boy gained strength, grew larger, and could soon take care of himself. He wanted to play with other boys,

---

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the preceding footnote.

although he did not look like them; he had not been kept clean and he was always shaggy-looking. That is why the other boys did not like him. Whenever he tried to take part in games with them, they chased him away. So he had to go home and stay with his grandmother.

The boy grew more and more until at last he was almost a young man. One day the chief wanted a good red fox fur. He told the young men of the camp to set their traps and announced that he would give his older daughter in marriage to whoever brought him the best fur. The man who brought the next best fur was to win his younger daughter. So that night all the young men went out and set their traps. The boy wanted to try too. His grandmother told him, "You are too ugly; you must not think of such things. All the good-looking young men, they are the ones to try. Don't talk any more about it." But when he kept begging his grandmother, she finally took him out and helped him set his trap. The next morning the boy got up very early, as his grandmother had told him to do. Just before he reached his trap, he saw a crow flying away from it.<sup>11</sup> In the trap he found a red fox. He picked it up and took it home to show to his grandmother. Even though the fur was not very shiny, the boy wanted to take it to the chief. Just then it was announced that the crow had brought a fine fur which pleased the chief very much. When he heard this, the boy sent his grandmother over to see the fox. "Go over there and look at that fox," he told her. "Pretend you like it, and while you examine it, pull out a few hairs and bring them to me." The old woman went over and looked at the fox. While she was examining it, she pulled out a few hairs and carried them back to her grandson. He took some of the hair and put it on the fox he had caught. While he was doing this, the fur changed completely. Suddenly it was sparkling and shining. The boy told his grandmother to

---

<sup>11</sup> When asked about the significance of the crow's visit to the trap, the informant pointed out that seeing the crow fly away awoke the boy's suspicion that the bird was guilty of some trickery. The informant went on to explain that the crow was always the first one up, and when it had inspected its own trap that morning, the bird had found a poor fur; however, in the boy's trap there was a beautiful fur, and immediately the crow exchanged its fur for the better one. At this point, the boy came along and the bird flew off. The informant insisted that this amplification was not an integral part of the tale.

take it to the chief, and the old woman did as he asked. The chief examined the fur and said, "That's exactly the kind I want. You may have my older daughter as your wife." But his older daughter wanted the crow for her husband. She told her younger sister, "I don't want that boy; he looks ugly and dirty. I would rather have the crow. You may have the boy." So the crow married the older girl and the boy married her younger sister. At night, the younger girl found that her husband turned into a different man. He was good-looking and clean, and he smelled good. The girl told her mother that her husband looked ugly in the daytime, but that at night he changed. "Then he's nice-looking and clean, and very kind to me. I think I will have a good husband." Soon the boy changed completely. Even in the daytime he was handsome and clean-looking. He made many friends among the people.

One day he decided to make a new kind of spear. To the shaft he attached two eagle feathers and a red fox fur.<sup>12</sup> The first morning after he had finished the spear, he tied it above the tepee entrance. That night he stuck the shaft of the spear into the ground behind the head of his bed. At this time buffalo and other game were very scarce, and the people were hungry. The men would come back from their hunting trips without any meat. So that night the young man told his grandmother to go over to the chief and ask him to make an announcement. "Tell him that I'm going out in the morning to look around for meat. I'm sure that I can find buffalo somewhere nearby. The people should sharpen their knives and be prepared." "Are you sure that you can find buffalo?" the old woman asked him. "Yes, I'm sure I can," he answered. So his grandmother told all this to the chief, and when he announced it to the people, the crow laughed and said, "Every morning I get up before anyone else and fly over the hills looking for game. I know that there is none near here or behind the hills." The next morning the boy got up at daybreak and went out. Soon he came back and said to his grandmother, "Go and tell the chief to announce to the people that the buffalo are coming. We all must surround them while they are moving toward the camp. That way we will get all we want. We will have lots of meat today!" He wanted all the men and women to help him kill the buffalo. So everyone went

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the two following footnotes.



out of the camp, and sure enough, the buffalo were coming near. The people surrounded the animals and closed in on them, trapping them. Many buffalo were killed and everyone had all the meat he needed. With his spear the boy killed more animals than anyone else did. Then they began cutting up and cleaning the meat. Only the crow had not killed any buffalo at all. He would fly around, looking for some fat on the buffalo heads that had been thrown aside, and on the path back to camp he would watch carefully so that he could pick up any little pieces that were dropped. He wanted to take some meat home just as all the others were doing.

One the way back to camp, the young man happened to be walking behind his sister-in-law, who was carrying a bag of buffalo blood on her back. She was wearing her best robe, made of buffalo hide with many fine designs on it. As he walked behind her, he pierced the bag with his spear, pretending it had happened by chance. Blood ran down all over her robe. "I didn't mean to do it; it was just an accident," he told her. "I don't care," she answered; "I have another robe at home. I will dry this one, scrape off the blood, and give it to your grandmother." From that time on the spear that the boy had made was called *koo'óheyinoo'*.<sup>13</sup> It was handed down from one generation to the next. But about fifty years ago it disappeared.<sup>14</sup>

This is the end of the story. When I was very young, I heard it from my grandmother and my father, who used to tell me many stories.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Literal translation: *it cuts open*.

<sup>14</sup> Although the informant never saw the spear, he was able to describe it vividly. The shaft, about four feet in length, was made of hard wood approximately one inch in diameter and was painted red. One end was provided with a sharp-pointed head about six inches long made of stone; the other was pointed so that the spear could be stuck into the ground, head up. Because of the respect in which the spear was held, it was never laid on the ground. Moreover, its standing position reminded the man to whom it was entrusted that he "should be always on his feet, on his way." The two black-tipped feathers of a white eagle attached to the shaft about one third of the distance from the spearhead were to give eagle power to the spear, and the red fox fur attached about one third of the distance from the opposite end was to give it the cleverness and swiftness of the fox.

<sup>15</sup> For Arapaho variants, cf. Dorsey and Kroeber, *op. cit.*, nos. 139-



NIH'ÓÓTHOO AND THE MAN WITH THE SHARP LEG<sup>16</sup>

Once when Nih'óóthoo<sup>17</sup> was walking along a creek, he came to a man who was sharpening his leg. First the man put his foot on a fallen tree and with his knife chopped it off just below the ankle. Then he whittled on the stump until it was quite sharp. Nih'óóthoo watched him closely. Then the man pointed to the buffalo which were grazing some distance away and said, "I am going to jump over there and get myself a nice fat buffalo. Watch me!" He took a few long steps and then jumped into the air in the direction of the buffalo. Soon he was above the fattest buffalo in the herd, but the animal did not even notice him. With his sharp leg he hit the buffalo in the shoulder so hard that the point of his leg came out through the opposite side. The buffalo fell dead and the rest of the herd ran away. The man pulled his leg out of the buffalo and said happily, "I got myself a nice fat one!" Nih'óóthoo asked the man if he could give him that kind of power. He wanted to have a sharp leg too. The man answered, "No, I don't give this power to anyone." But when Nih'óóthoo kept begging, the man said, "Well, I will make you able to do it if you won't use your sharp leg too often. I use

---

143, pp. 341-388, and H. R. Voth, *op. cit.*, p. 43 (The Boy That Was Carried Off by the Wind).

For an incomplete version in the Arapaho language, with translation and linguistic notes, *cf.* A. L. Koeber, *Arapaho Dialects* (University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 12, Berkeley, 1916), pp. 127ff.

See also Thompson, *op. cit.*, comparative notes for the tale Lodge-Boy and Thrown-Away, pp. 319ff.

<sup>16</sup> This tale was volunteered by the informant under the above title.

<sup>17</sup> Nih'óóthoo (*cf.* also Nih'āñca<sup>n</sup> and Nihansan) and Coyote are the main tricksters of Arapaho tales. Whenever both of them appear in a story, Nih'óóthoo as a rule is deceived by the Coyote, who deprives him of his catch. Thus, Nih'óóthoo is characterized both by his trickery and his stupidity. Though the word nih'óóthoo is used in Arapaho for both *white man* and *spider*, the trickster is always described as being entirely human. The connection between the two meanings, *white man* and *spider*, has never been satisfactorily explained, *cf.* Dorsey and Kroeber, *op. cit.*, footnote 3, pp. 6f. One possible etymology seems to have been overlooked: the word *nenih'óóxu*? *tight, small hole* connotes to older Arapaho speakers both the idea of the white men's dwellings, which have very small doors in proportion to their overall size, and the idea of the small dens attached to the webs of certain spiders.

mine only when I really have to. Be sure not to use it for fun. Nih'óóthoo said, "All right, I will do whatever you tell me." Then the man said, "Come here and place your foot on this log. I will sharpen your leg." As Nih'óóthoo was placing his foot on the log, he saw the man's big knife. He became frightened, and when the man was just about to chop off his foot, Nih'óóthoo cried, "Wait! I have to straighten my foot a little bit." When the man held the knife ready a second time, Nih'óóthoo again cried "Wait!" but the man did not wait and chopped off Nih'óóthoo's foot. Then he sharpened the stump. When he finished, the man said again, "Now you can go, but don't use this power unless you are hungry and have to get your meat this way. Don't use it more than four<sup>18</sup> times." "All right," said Nih'óóthoo, and he left. He had not gone far when he saw a herd of buffalo grazing. He could hardly wait to try his sharpened leg. He took a few long steps as he had seen the man do, and then jumped, saying, "I want the big fat one!" He killed the buffalo he wanted just as the other man had. He felt very happy about it. Then he left, without touching the buffalo meat. Every time he came to buffalo, he would jump and kill one. When he jumped for the fifth buffalo, things seemed to go as well as before and he hit the fattest buffalo of the herd. His sharp leg went through the animal's shoulder, but when the buffalo fell down, Nih'óóthoo's foot was suddenly attached to his leg again and he could not get loose from the buffalo. But this time the animal was not killed. It dragged Nih'óóthoo through the brush, and soon he was all torn and scratched. Whenever he tried to get loose, the buffalo kicked him. Only when he was half dead could he free himself.<sup>19</sup>

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

---

<sup>18</sup> As with most American Indian tribes, *four* is the mystic number of the Arapaho.

<sup>19</sup> For other Arapaho tales containing the motif of the sharpened leg (J2424), cf. Dorsey and Kroeber, *op. cit.*, no. 57, pp. 112-113, no. 108, p. 257, and no. 109, p. 258. For a general bibliography of this motif, see Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 299f.

## MEMBERSHIP IN THE HOOSIER FOLKLORE SOCIETY

Membership in the Hoosier Folklore Society is two dollars a calendar year. This is open to individuals, schools, and libraries anywhere in the United States. Members receive **HOOSIER FOLKLORE**, a quarterly for the publication of folklore of Indiana and neighboring states. Single copies may be purchased for fifty cents each.

## JOINT MEMBERSHIP IN HOOSIER FOLKLORE SOCIETY AND AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY

Joint membership in the Hoosier Folklore Society and the American Folklore Society is available at a special rate of five dollars a year to Indiana residents. Members receive **HOOSIER FOLKLORE**, **THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE** and **MEMOIRS OF THE AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY** as issued.

Applications for membership and membership dues for 1950 should be mailed promptly to Mrs. W. Edson Richmond, 716 South Park Avenue, Treasurer, Hoosier Folklore Society, Bloomington, Indiana.

Members are urged to secure new members for the society and to contribute manuscripts for publication.

---

## STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS OF TITLES REFERRED TO IN NOTES AND ARTICLES

CFQ	—CALIFORNIA FOLKLORE QUARTERLY
HF	—HOOSIER FOLKLORE
HFB	—HOOSIER FOLKLORE BULLETIN
JAFL	—JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE
MAFS	—MEMOIRS OF THE AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY
NYFQ	—NEW YORK FOLKLORE QUARTERLY
SFQ	—SOUTHERN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY
WF	—WESTERN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY
Type Index	—Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, <b>THE TYPES OF THE FOLK-TALE</b> , Helsinki. 1928.
Motif Index	—Stith Thompson, <b>MOTIF-INDEX OF FOLK-LITERATURE</b> , Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Studies, 1932-36.
The Folktale	—Stith Thompson, <b>THE FOLKTALE</b> , New York, The Dryden Press, 1947.